



The thing, he said, would come in the night at three  
From the old churchyard on the hill below;  
But crouching by an oak fire's wholesome glow,  
I tried to tell myself it could not be.

Surely, I mused, it was pleasantry  
Devised by one who did not truly know  
The Elder Sign, bequeathed from long ago,  
That sets the fumbling forms of darkness free.

He had not meant it - no - but still I lit  
Another lamp as starry Leo climbed  
Out of the Seekonk, and a steeple chimed  
Three - and the firelight faded, bit by bit.

Then at the door that cautious rattling came -  
And the mad truth devoured me like a flame!



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